



New England Agricultural Statistics Service

*a field office of the National Agricultural Statistics Service
United States Department of Agriculture*

*22 Bridge St. Third Floor
PO Box 1444
Concord, NH 03302*

*Aubrey R. Davis, Director
www.usda.gov/nass*

*603-224-9639
Fax: 603-225-1434
nass-nh@nass.usda.gov*



February 2003

As the 12th edition of this annual statistics bulletin goes to the printer, we are about six weeks into the data collection phase of the 2002 Census of Agriculture. This is only the second time USDA has conducted our own Census. In about a year (February 2004), the results of this effort will be published on the Internet. We are anticipating that New England farmers will again respond at a high rate, perhaps exceeding the 87.7 percent response rate recorded for the 1997 Census.

Our yearly statistics from 1999 through 2003 will be subject to revision as we use the Census results as a benchmark for these revisions. Most of our annual estimates are based on very small sample sizes out of total populations of producers of specific commodities. Not only will we have data on major commodities to be used as a guide for these revisions, but we will have updated information for hundreds of items that can only be found in the Census of Agriculture. New to the census for 2002 will be data on farms using computers, multiple farm operators, production contracts/landlord shares, certified organic acreage harvested and sales, aquatic plants, acres treated with manure, grain storage capacity, inventory and number sold for bison, deer, elk, llama, emus and ostriches, and more detailed farm-related income.

Nothing has changed in our dependence on farmers and agribusinesses as the primary source for data. Without the consistent responses from these sources, we could not prepare accurate estimates from our data collection efforts. We remain indebted to the thousands of respondents that form the basis of our official estimating program.

I want to acknowledge the support received from each New England Commissioner of Agriculture for the preparation, publication and mailing of this annual bulletin. Without their funding, this information tool would not be available. Also, it is a sincere pleasure to work with our dedicated staff of federal employees and contract data collectors who are the foundation of our program.

Sincerely,

Aubrey R. Davis
Director

*Cover photograph of Waitsfield, Vermont
taken by David Brownell, Andover, New Hampshire*